

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeder comprising:

a suction carrying means for sucking an uppermost sheet of sheets piled up and for carrying the uppermost sheet from the upstream side to the downstream side in a carrying direction;

an oblique carrying means for carrying a sheet on the oblique carrying means, wherein the oblique carrying means locates in the downstream side of the suction carrying means, wherein the oblique carrying means carries the sheet slantingly toward a guide wall in order to position an edge of the sheet along the guide wall, and wherein the oblique carrying means carries the sheet downstream in the carrying direction; and

a handling member for allowing only the uppermost sheet carried by the suction carrying means to pass through the handling member,

wherein the sheet feeder separates sheets one by one from the sheets piled up on a sheet feeding table and then carries the sheets,

characterized in that wherein there are provided:

a detecting means for detecting the sheet which is passing through the handling member, wherein the detecting means locates in the downstream side of the handling member; and

a retracting mechanism for retracting the handling member from the sheet passing through the handling member while the detecting means is detecting the sheet passing through.